

March 2017 - NAJYRC Dressage: What, Where, When & Why

Written by Cassidy Gallman, USDF Region 7 JR/YR Coordinator
Tuesday, 28 February 2017 03:34

The North American Junior & Young Rider Championships promotes horsemanship, riding skills and much more.

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Every year, Junior riders (age 14-18) and Young Riders (age 16-21) throughout North America give everything they have for one goal. One dream to compete with the best of the best in their chosen sport. The North American Junior and Young Rider Championships is the most prestigious competition for youth riders on the North American continent in eventing, jumping and dressage. A team and individual event, the NAJYRC creates a unique high performance atmosphere that fosters collaboration, organization, and a mental toughness that young people will rarely find elsewhere. The NAJYRC helps riders improve, and, more importantly, creates stronger individuals for lives within the equine community and beyond.



I am proud to say I have been part of this competition for five years and have represented the United State Dressage Federation Region 7 three times. Once as a Junior, twice as a spectator/cheerleader/team mascot/captain and twice as a Young Rider. Now I am the United States Dressage Federation Region 7 Junior and Young Rider Coordinator and I am excited to share the experiences I have had with new generations of riders.

As a young dressage rider this competition is eye opening. At home and at local shows, youth dressage riders are usually out numbered by adult amateurs and professionals. While I believe this is a check in the pro column because it is important to be able to connect and learn from individuals of all ages, it can cause us to feel like an anomaly in the sport. We ask ourselves, “Am I the only dressage rider my age?”

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During my first year at the NAJYRC I was amazed and overwhelmed when I realized how many young competitive athletes there were in the sport. And not just from the United States but from all over the continent. It awakened me to the world of dressage that was far beyond my hometown. We are definitely not alone. This is just one of the many reasons why this competition is so important in the development of youth dressage riders.

One thing I want to make very clear is the NAJYRC teaches us so much more than riding. This competition gives us experience on an international stage that will give us a leg up in the future if we decide to become professionals but it also provides us with the opportunity to learn crucial social skills and promote sportsmanship.

The North American Junior and Young Rider Championships made me a stronger rider and, more importantly, made me a stronger person.



Oh...and did I mention it's fun? You will laugh so hard you will not be able to breathe. The legendary golf cart parade is reason to go in itself, and so many unexpected things will happen that make the stress worth it. NAJYRC is an experience of a lifetime.

How It Works

There are nine United State Dressage Federation regions or territories and they all have NAJYRC teams. California, Nevada and Hawaii make up Region 7. To be on the USDF Region 7 team riders must be domiciled in one of these three states.

For each team there are eight rider positions. Four riders on the Junior team and four riders on the Young Rider team. The FEI junior level is considered 4th level but it is more like a very difficult 3rd level test. The FEI Young Rider level is equal to the Prix St. Georges. In qualifying

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shows, all riders ride a Team Test, an Individual Test and freestyle. At the NAJYRC, only the top 18 riders from the Individual test will ride in the freestyle competition.

This year the North American Junior and Young Rider Championships are in Saugerties, NY at HITS on the Hudson on July 18-23. The qualifying period ends June 19, 2017 and application of Intent or Rider application must be submitted before May 2. Riders must ride at qualifying shows (a list can be found at usdfregion7.org) and obtain three scores in the Team test that average to 62% or above, three scores in the Individual test that average to 62% or above, and one freestyle score that is 62% or above to be in contention for the team.

The four riders competing for the USDF Region 7 FEI Junior team with the highest overall averages will be on the 2017 team. The same goes for the Young Rider team. The teams will be announced at the end of the qualifying period.

The USDF Region 7 team fundraises to pay for NAJYRC show fees and provide team members with official team attire. When available, funds will be used to help with transportation and housing expenses. Riders are expected to help with fundraising efforts during the qualifying period but are not required to.

This year USDF Region 7 has a new team of individuals working hard to provide USDF Region 7 youth riders the tools, information and a place to gain the skills they need to achieve their goals. Whether that may be to boost college applications or to one day become a member of the U.S. dressage team.

I believe in the NAJYRC and what it gives to young people. Please check out www.usdfregion7.org and click on the NAJYRC tab. It will provide all you need to know about the competition and the qualifying procedures. If you have any questions please contact me at Cassidy@usdfregion7.org.